# *Oldest European Colony In Asia and Its People*

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WHEN the visitor in Hongkong gets tired of the rush and hurry of that thriving excrescence of the China coast; when the constant firing of salutes in honor of the daily advent of warships grates on his nerves; when the dense summer fogs have hid the mountain side for a week and the sun has apparently withdrawn to another universe, the wise man lunches at the Hongkong Club, takes a ricksha down the water front to the wharf of the Hongkong, Canton & Macao Steamship Company and embarks on one of the comfortable boats which leave in the early afternoon and land you in Macao in time for dinner the same evening.

Travelers have noted the amazing difference between places as near together as Boston and New York, as London and Paris; but Hongkong and Macao are separated by differences greater than those which distinguish the great cities of the western world, though they are but forty miles apart.

Hongkong is young, vigorous, aggressive, turning an expectant face to the future; it is the seat of a great commerce; it is a military outpost of the first rank; it is England's most important naval base in the Far East. Macao is a city of dreams, offering to the curious visitor the spectacle of ancient forts and churches, decayed ramparts and all the relics of past greatness.

Hongkong was founded in 1842 as the outcome of the first Anglo-Chinese war; and it is the concrete expression of western ideas of colonization in its modern form—colonization, that is to say, by the power of commerce, by the improvement of communications, by the constant interaction of native and European methods of thought and work.

Macao dates back to the sixteenth century, is the oldest European colony in Asia, and in its ruined churches and forts the present day traveler sees the remains of a system of colonization in which the priest and the soldier were the guiding spirits, and the man of commerce merely an adjunct.

### The Trip From Hongkong to Macao.

The trip from Hongkong to Macao occupies about four hours, and the boat never passes out of sight of land. The journey is full of interest, for the way lies among a thousand islands whose sheltered bays were, within the memory of living man, the haunts of fleets of piratical junks; and if you are fortunate enough to have as companion one of the "old-timers" who still linger around the China coast ports you may hear many a tale of bloodshed and robbery called to mind by some deserted stretch of beach to be seen from your deck chair, or by any one of the thousand small happenings on board ship which serve as an excuse for garrulous reminiscence.

The boat itself furnishes ample material for study. The Chinese passengers, except those who can afford and are allowed to pay for a saloon ticket, are kept below decks, and are cut off from the rest of the boat by an iron grating provided with a small wicket gate, in front of which an armed sentry marches to and fro.

The first sight of this arrangement comes as a surprise to one fresh from a comfortable chair in the verendah of the Hongkong Club, where he has been reading at east about the coal strike in the United States or the naval manoeuvres in the English channel, surrounded by what passes for luxury in the Far East, and free from the remotest idea of imminent outrage or turmoil.

Yet an inquiry made in the proper quarter will soon satisfy him that the iron bars and the armed sentry represent a very real need of Chinese travel. He will be told that if these safeguards were removed it would be an open question whether some fine afternoon a gang of desperadoes might not take passage on the boat, murder the crew and passengers at some suitable moment, collect everything of value on board, hail a passing junk and disappear into the great mysterious land we call China, leaving no trace behind.

Incredulity avails you little in the face of all the instances which are forthcoming at your slightest protest; and when you have been regaled for an hour with accounts of piracies committed within sight of a dozen warships lying in Hongkong harbor, and these not in ancient times, but only a year or two ago, you take an early opportunity of making a casual visit below to assure yourself that the bars are still there and that the sentry is not asleep.

### The Chief Hotel and the Towering Pawnshop.

Once alongside the wharf in Macao it is but a few moments before you are ashore and on your way, if you are wise, to the Hotel Boa Vista, which is delightfully situated on the brow of a hill, whence you may enjoy a view very like a miniature reproduction of the Bay of Naples.

The Boa Vista Hotel is one of the best in the Far East. You find there comfortable rooms, good foods, a modicum of civility, and that rarest of Asiatic conditions, comparative quiet. If you make your visit in the summer the terraced garden of the hotel is delightfully cool after the unbearable heat and mugginess of Hongkong; and if you choose the winter you will be grateful for the pleasant open fire in your room.

Macao is a favorite resort of honeymooners; and the cynic may discern in a week's sojourn there every degree of illusion or disillusion to which that peculiar state is popularly supposed to lend itself.

The most striking feature in the general view of Macao which you obtain from the verandah of the Hotel Boa Vista is the local skyscraper which does duty as a pawnbroker's establishment. It is a building of some seven or eight stories, and looks not unlike a rudimentary storage warehouse. It has rows of narrow windows, and ingress is obtained through a very small door protected by bars and bolts innumerable.

The pawnbroker's establishment plays a very important part in Chinese life, and represents the result of centuries of disorder and pillage. In those tall, ungainly houses the people store most of their valuables, from bags of dollars down to ceremonial hats, and the security afforded by putting such things in pawn is very apparent when you understand the methods adopted by the pawnbrokers to protect themselves from attack.

The only way of breaking into a Chinese pawnbroker's is to attack the single small door in the basement, for none of the windows are large enough to admit a human body. The door is, of course, strongly guarded, but in order to discourage any attempt at robbery, and to render such an attempt abortive when undertaken, the top story of the house is provided with carboys of acid, large pieces of granite, and apparatus for boiling water, so that at the first sign of attack John Chinaman barricades his door, retires to the top of his house, and from that coign of vantage presently throws sulphuric acid, lumps of rock and boiling water upon his assailants. It has been found in practice more efficient than insurance.

### Gambling Business and Government Lottery.

The principal, if not the only industries, which flourish in Macho, are the Chinese fan-tan gambling business and the government lottery. The latter possesses few attractions for any one with whom gambling is anything less than a passion. It involves purchasing a long strip of thin pink paper, with a lot of unnecessary details printed in Chinese and Portuguese, and then waiting a month until the results of the drawings are announced, and you can speculate at leisure on the reason why the number next to yours won a prize of $10,000 when the owner of the lucky number was a person no more worthy of riches than a Sikh policeman in Hongkong or the fireman on a steam launch at Canton.

Each ticket in the Macao lottery bears the inscription, "Santa Casa de Misericordia de Macau," which, being translated by one having no knowledge of the Portuguese language, may be taken to mean "The sacred cause of unhappiness at Macao."

The Macao lottery is popularly supposed to be run on perfectly fair lines, and one hears all over the Far East of lucky individuals who have paid off the mortgage on the farm by a judicious investment in tickets; but if you wish actually to meet such a man face to face you discover that he is always round the next corner.

The Chinese gambling houses, which are the most characteristic feature of life in Macao, are well worth visiting; and as you can stake anything from a cent upward to $500, you have it in your power to regulate the price of admission to suit your own pocket, though for a great number of devotees to the fascinating game of fan-tan the show loses its attractiveness only when every cent which has been earned, borrowed or stolen has passed over to the smiling gentleman who holds the bank.

Everybody, high and low, appears to arrive sooner or later at a Chinese gambling shop; and if you are carried there in a ricksha you may have the satisfaction of watching the ricksha-puller stake the fare you have just paid him, in the eternal and unquenchable hope that a fortunate combination of chances is about to relieve him forever of the toil and burden of the day.

The gambling houses are built on the same general plan. A room on the ground floor contains a large square table on two sides of which are seated the banker and his assistants, the other two sides being open to the public. The floor of the room above this is open in the middle just over the gaming table, and the gentry or foreign patrons sit in the upper room and hand down their stakes in a small basket by means of a rope.

The game is simple in the extreme. In the centre of the gaming table a square is drawn with the sides numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4. The banker takes a double handful of small brass coins and places them in a heap under a china bowl. Betting may then be commenced. The coins under the bowl are to be counted out in groups of four, and you are at liberty to bet that the last count will come out even, or leave one, two, or three odd coins over.

The stakes are placed on the table in four heaps, opposite the sides of the square which correspond to the number the various players are backing. If the count results in one coin being left over, those who backed 2, 3 and 4 lose the amount of their stake; and those who have backed No. 1 receive from the bank three times the value of their stakes, less 10 per cent., which goes to the banker.

It appears to be a pretty fair way of losing your money, as the chances are three to one against any particular number turning up, and the bank gives you odds of three to one, less 10 per cent.

The regular patrons of these gambling places have the same peculiarities which you may observe among their more distinguished prototypes at Monte Carlo. One makes 20 stakes every day on the old numbers, 20 on the even numbers; one bets a dozen times on each number alternately, another keeps a regular deposit with the banker and instructs him to bet on one particular number for a whole week, and so on through a series of peculiar fads or fancies.

### Grotto of Camoens, Portugal's Great Poet.

The chief object of interest in Macao is, however, the grotto of Camoens, the greatest poet of Portugal. He was born in Lisbon in 1527, and served in the African campaigns against the Moors. Like many bright young men in history, he got himself into trouble by publishing a satirical account of the doings of a man of power, in this case the Portuguese Viceroy of Goa in India, and he was sent out to Macao, where he held a small official post.

His great poem, the "Lusiar," or, to give it its title in Portuguese, "Os Lusiadas," may be classed among the great popular poems of European literature. Thirty-eight editions of it were printed in Portugal before the year 1700, and it has been translated into English, French, German, Dutch, Polish, Italian, Bohemian, Russian, Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

Fr. Ferreira, who read the verses on behalf of the Holy Inquisition, for the purpose of deciding whether publication should be permitted by the Church, describes the poem in these words, written in 1572: "I saw, by order of the Holy Inquisition, these 10 cantos of the 'Lusiad' of Luiz de Camoens, relating the valorous deeds in arms of the Portuguese in Asia and Europe, and I did not find in them a single offensive thing, nor aught contrary to the faith and good manners; although it seemed to me necessary to warn the reader that the author, in order to exaggerate the perils of the navigation and entrance into India of the Portuguese, makes use of a fiction of the heathen gods * * * and therefore it appeared to me that the book is worthy of being printed, and the author displays in it much talent and erudition in the human sciences."

The best of Camoens at Macao stands in a natural grotto formed by a number of huge bowlders of granite. On the pedestal are engraved six stanzas from the "Lusiad," of which the following is one, taken from Sir Richard Burton's translation:

Amid such fierce extreme of fear and pain,
Such grievous labors, perils lacking name,
Whose fair honor wooeth aye shall gain
Men's true nobility, immortal Fame;
Not those who ever lean on ancient strain
Imping on noble trunk a barren claim;
Not those reclining on the golden beds,
When Moscow's zobiln downy softness spreads.

The grotto of Camoens has inspired a good deal of poetry in the breasts of many visitors, and some of these efforts have been considered worthy of perpetuation in the form of engraved tablets which flank the poet's bust. Not the least pleasing of these tributes are the Latin verses written by Sir John Davis, an official of the East India Company, and the second Governor of Hongkong, in 1844, commencing:

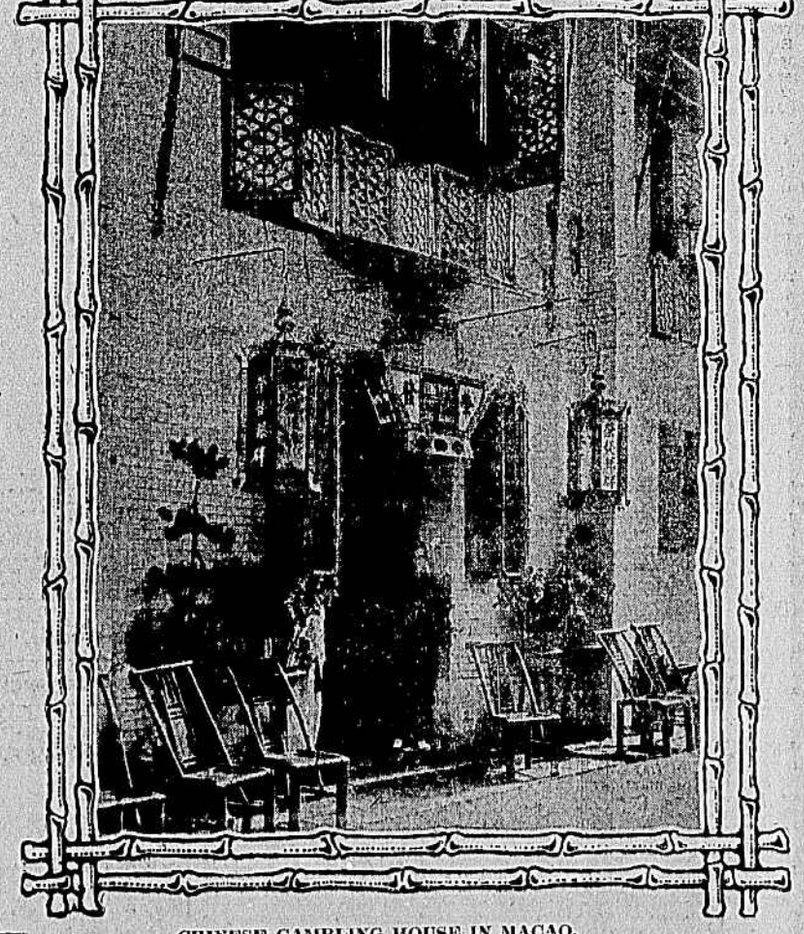
Hic, in remotis sol ubi rupibus
Frondes per altas mollius ingidit,
Fervebat in pulchram camoenam
Ingenium Camoentis ardens.

When the tourist has seen the grotto, and turns his face toward the town again, he can scarcely fail to be impressed with the great changes which have befallen Macao. Once the most prosperous port in the Portugese Empire, the seat of a flourishing trade, an active missionary establishment, a vice-regal court, and the headquarters of an army, it is to-day nothing more than a suburb of Hongkong.

Its harbor has silted up; its noble buildings are in ruins, and the few score Chinese junks which lie at anchor in the bay serve only to carry the mind to the greatest seaport in the world, which lies but a half-day's journey to the South, where the scream of steam sirens, the rattle of cargo winches and the turmoil of a vast commerce cease neither by day or night.



A LADY MUSICIAN OF MACAO.



CHINESE GAMBLING HOUSE IN MACAO.